

Michaud Pushes for Jobs Plan

Thursday, December 03 2009

Also stresses need for helping unemployed and addressing national debt

WASHINGTON, DC – As President Obama hosts a White House forum on jobs and economic growth today, Congressman Mike Michaud took to the House floor to urge Congress and the Administration to refocus their efforts on job creation, providing help for the unemployed and reducing the national debt. Michaud sent the attached letter to the President and congressional leaders outlining ideas for consideration as talks of a future jobs package progress.

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"The jobless recovery is really taking a toll on Maine families," said Michaud. "I appreciate that the Administration is exploring ways to promote jobs. But we must take action and push smart policies that invest in job creation, help those in most need and address our national debt. The health of our economy and the ability of Mainers to provide for their families should not take a back seat to any issue."

* The full text of Michaud's letter to President Obama and congressional leaders can be found below:

December 3, 2009

President Barack Obama

The White House

Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. President,

I am pleased that you convened a forum on jobs and economic growth in order to discuss ways to create more opportunities for American workers. Although some indicators suggest the economy is improving slightly, economic relief remains elusive for millions of unemployed Americans and for thousands of Mainers.

Moving forward into 2010, our nation's record unemployment rate threatens our economic recovery. Mainers that I represent want the Congress and the Administration to focus on job creating initiatives, but they don't want them to break the bank. While I don't support another stimulus package, we must refocus our efforts on initiatives that create jobs and promote long-lasting economic development. We must provide assistance to unemployed Americans so that they can support their families until they are able to find a new job. We must also pass serious reforms that will reduce our nation's unsustainable debt.

No single plan will improve the employment landscape. But any initiatives considered by Congress must be targeted and be fiscally responsible to build a foundation for long-term economic growth. I look forward to working with your Administration and my colleagues in Congress to ensure that our economic recovery effort incorporates these principles and provides tangible relief to struggling Americans.

Creating Jobs and Promoting Long-term Economic Development

Federal programs and tax credits that create jobs, increase or protect the competitive advantage of American companies; promote small business growth; and directly promote long-term economic development should be prioritized in any congressional effort to improve our economic recovery as a way to address the recession in a sustainable way. Specific job creating proposals that I strongly recommend incorporating into any package designed to boost jobs and promote our economic recovery include, but are not limited to:

- Significantly investing in our transportation and infrastructure through a strong multi-year highway reauthorization to offset the continued rise in construction unemployment, the collapse of the private construction market, and state budget constraints that limit our states' ability to finance highway and transit projects;
- Increasing affordability and availability of credit to small businesses through providing strong federal loan guarantees and reducing lending program fees;
- Promoting job creating tax credits that benefit small businesses and manufacturers, such as the extension and expansion of the tax credits for biomass producers;
- Advancing trade policies that do not disadvantage American companies and workers, and addressing the problematic effects of the Value Added Tax on our domestic manufacturers; and
- Fully funding regional economic development commissions, including the Northern Border Regional Commission, that are targeted to promote sustainable economic growth in distressed areas of our country.

In combination, these programs and policies present a comprehensive strategy to create jobs and support American businesses and manufacturers. They also lay the foundation for sustainable economic growth that our country and the state of Maine desperately needs.

Continuing Assistance to Those Who Have Been Most Affected by the Recession

In addition to creating jobs and promoting long-term economic development, we must also maintain our commitment to helping the victims of the downturn. Economists agree that the road to economic recovery will be long, and some experts suggest that unemployment may reach 11% in 2010 and remain at historically high levels for some time to come. Continuing assistance in the form of extended unemployment insurance and COBRA health benefits makes economic sense and provides the necessary means for Americans to support their families during the recession. The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Communities program is another initiative that should be put online as soon as possible. Similar to the safety net provided by unemployment benefits and the well-known TAA program, TAA for Communities will provide assistance to entire communities that have seen industries destroyed by our nation's failed trade policies. These programs will help to mitigate some of the worst effects of the recession until the economy has recovered.

Promoting Serious Reforms to Address the National Debt

Creating more jobs and helping the unemployed are critical pieces of our economic strategy; however, they cannot be the only components of our recovery effort. We must finally begin to consistently pursue federal policies that invest taxpayer dollars wisely and protect American companies and manufacturers. We should prioritize federal programs that yield economic benefits to individuals and communities long after the economy has recovered. Moreover, we must sign statutory pay-as-you-go budget rules into law to prevent future Congresses from spending recklessly. In addition, we should pass the SAFE Commission Act, which would legislate a plan to address the untenable imbalance between

federal spending and revenues. If we attempt to rebuild the economy without consideration for the trade deficit and the national debt, we will set this country on a path of economic decline, not economic recovery.

I am hopeful the White House Forum on Jobs and Economic Growth will result in a productive discussion about ways in which your Administration and Congress can provide Americans the economic relief they need. I believe the three principles I have outlined above should be a part of any job creation conversation and strategy. People need jobs, and there simply is no true economic recovery without them. By crafting a pragmatic policy that addresses the short-term economic needs while promoting long-term economic goals, we will put more Americans back to work sooner in more sustainable jobs and industries.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals. I look forward to working with you as we craft a plan to improve the economy and put Americans back to work.

With warmest regards,

Michael H. Michaud

Member of Congress

Cc: Speaker Nancy Pelosi

Majority Leader Steny Hoyer

Majority Whip James Clyburn

Democratic Caucus Chairman John Larson

House Floor Statement of Congressman Mike Michaud

December 3, 2009

Almost every Mainer has been affected by this recession or knows someone who's struggling.

Moving forward into the New Year, our nation's record unemployment rate threatens our economic recovery.

While I don't support a second stimulus bill, we must refocus our efforts on initiatives that create jobs and promote long-lasting economic development.

We must continue to help those unemployed Americans support their families until they are able to find a new job.

And we must pass serious reforms that will reduce our nation's unsustainable debt, because we can't grow our economy on the backs of future generations.

Any initiatives considered by Congress must be targeted and fiscally responsible to build a foundation for long-term economic growth.

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